



Statements On Major Events Not Involving Campus

Responsible Official:	Vice Chancellor and Chief External Relations Officer
Responsible Office:	External Relations
Last Revision Date:	October 20, 2023
Summary:	Guidelines to evaluate the issuing of a public statement by the university on major events that do not directly implicate the campus.
Scope:	Applies to public statements on any major crisis, tragedy, or matter that does not directly implicate the university. Does not apply to events that take place on campus or directly involve our campus.

Contact:	Jim Chiavelli, Associate Vice Chancellor for Marketing & Public Relations
Email:	jchiavelli@ucmerced.edu
Phone:	(209) 228-3420

I. GUIDELINES SUMMARY & SCOPE

These guidelines should be used to help evaluate the issuing of an official public statement by the university on a major crisis, tragedy or matter that does not directly implicate the campus. These criteria do not apply to events that take place on campus or directly involve our campus.

In responding to non-campus events or circumstances, the purposes of statements by university leaders are to

- Express empathy for and support those impacted or concerned.
- Potentially inform those impacted of campus resources.
- Reinforce UC Merced values.
- Demonstrate moral leadership.
- Highlight key research by UC Merced on relevant issues.

Determining whether to create statements should be based on the totality of the facts in each situation. Therefore, these criteria should be considered in context rather than as universal rules.

Schools and other academic and administrative units are advised to consult campus leadership before committing to a message about external events or issues, to ensure coordination.

In all events, should the university decide to issue an official statement, academic and administrative units are recommended to amplify that statement by sharing through their own communications channels.

II. GUIDELINES

A. TYPES OF EVENTS OR CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Matters that involve egregious violations of human rights or tragedies that involve multiple civilian fatalities.
2. Matters that impact a significant segment of the UC Merced community, through connections of family, national origin or other affinities.
3. Major government policy announcements or shifts that impact UC Merced's core missions — e.g., significant changes to DACA, visas, Pell Grants, immigration or education regulation.

B. TIMING AND CONTENT OF MESSAGING

1. Messaging should include information that provides a direct benefit to those affected, such as identifying resources for learning about the event or circumstance or identifying useful responses (e.g., how to donate funds or blood; how to access counseling services; how to contact public officials).
2. Any decision to message should be timely, such that members of our community are likely still formulating their impressions and we can help promote a clear understanding of the context/circumstances.

C. AMPLIFYING UC OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT (UCOP) MESSAGING

We are committed to speaking about events that are pertinent to our values. However, if UCOP has issued a statement, UC Merced need not create something similar, but may instead share with its audiences that UCOP has provided a statement which we endorse/respect.

We recognize that each of the 10 campuses is uniquely qualified to decide its own procedures and motivations for speaking. We need not be compelled to speak by other campuses' decisions.

D. APPROPRIATE MESSENGER

In the most significant cases, only the chancellor will speak on behalf of the institution. There will be times when it is appropriate for the chief diversity officer, the provost, the vice chancellor for student affairs or a dean to issue the communication. In the latter cases, it is important to maintain institutional integrity in voice, substance, and awareness of contextual considerations.

Accordingly, External Relations will review any such proposed message, and may invite other parties to be signatories. Responses from those invited should occur in a timely manner – typically within a few hours. In all cases, we should strive to avoid lengthy back-and-forth editing processes in the interest of producing timely and relevant statements.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

Schools and other academic and administrative units should consult campus leadership before committing to a message about external events or issues, to ensure coordination.

All proposed statements should be submitted to External Relations for review.

IV. GUIDELINE REVISION HISTORY

Date	Action/Summary of Changes
October 20, 2023	Guidelines issued